

# SPARK GAP

## M A R C

## SPRING, A TIME FOR CHANGING WEATHER CONDITIONS

Spring is finally here and with it comes sudden changes in weather conditions. This causes increased chances for severe weather. All radio amateurs need to be aware of the weather conditions and be prepared to offer assistance as the eyes and ears of the National Weather Service. We must all be ready to start action when called on by the **Central Indiana Skywarn Net** on the 146.700 repeater in Indianapolis.

If you know of a severe weather **WATCH** or **WARNING** tune your station to the 146.700 repeater and monitor the Central Indiana Skywarn Net. The net is run from the **National Weather Service** in Indianapolis and can alert Indiana counties of possible severe weather. If the proper conditions exist for severe weather in your county the Skywarn control operator will request that you activate a local Skywarn net. It is important to bring up this net when requested by the NWS. Even with all the electronic weather instruments used by the NWS they still need amateur radio operators and the reports they provide.

Although **RACES** and **ARES** are separate entities, the ARRL advocates dual membership.

During a "non declared emergency", ARES can operate under ARES, but when an emergency or disaster is **officially declared** by state or federal authority, the operation can become RACES with no change in personnel or frequencies. This allows an ARES group whose membership are all enrolled in and certified by RACES to operate in an emergency with great flexibility and efficiency.

Whatever the circumstances, our purpose is to serve the public and adjust to changing conditions. The NWS is counting on the help from the local amateur radio operators to give them accurate information in a timely and professional manner.

For more information on this subject I recommend a booklet publication from the ARRL titled **Public Service Communications Manual**. I encourage all members of ARES and RACES to get a copy to read and study. The booklet contains a wealth of information and is a real bargain for only one dollar. Also check into the Central Indiana Skywarn web page at (<http://www.cisw.com>) for more information.

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Robert (Bob) LaGrange, N9SIU — ARRL Indiana District 6 Emergency Coordinator

## Club Officers and Committees Meet

Our club president AI, WA9ZET, has requested that a meeting of club officers and committees be held after the dinner of the Wednesday Night Supper Club on the third Wednesday of each month. By consent of the supper group, this dinner and meeting will be held each month at the Hoosier Country Kitchen. This is located at exit 95 of I-65 in Johnson County.

**Next Club Meeting is Saturday, April 17 at 8 AM**

April 1999

## The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club Membership      Newsletter

The Mid-State Amateur Radio Club is based in Franklin, Indiana. Membership is open to all amateur radio operators and other interested persons.

Club meetings are conducted on the third Saturday of each month in the training room of the Johnson County Emergency Operations Center at 1100 Hospital Road in Franklin, IN.

Membership dues are \$18.00 per year for full members. Other types of membership are available.

Amateur Radio Operator License testing is offered following the club meeting during the months of March through November.

The club maintains an open repeater on the 2-meter band at 146.835 MHz. Each full member has access to the repeater and autopatch.

Membership dues payment and change of address should be mailed to the club treasurer at the address listed below.

The Spark Gap is the monthly club newsletter. Articles and information that would be of interest to the club members are welcome. Information may be submitted by E-mail or by mailing to the club address listed below.

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**Field Day**  
Jack Parker  
(W8ISH)

JR Osborne  
(KB9HSE)

Larry Turner  
(KB9PWN)

Al Soltis  
(WA9ZET)

**Activities**  
Jack Parker  
(W8ISH)

Bob LaGrange  
(N9SIU)

Other

Appointments

Pending

**Membership**  
Larry Turner  
(KB9PWN)

Bill Goodall  
(K9DBY)

Other

Appointments

Pending



**MARC, PO Box 836, Franklin, IN 46131**

A SPECIAL SERVICE CLUB OF THE ARRL



# Official Observers

## Status Clarified

The FCC's top amateur enforcer, Riley Hollingsworth, K4ZDH, says that hams who receive notices from ARRL Official Observers should take them seriously or take the consequences. "Failure to take the notices seriously and to take corrective action where possible will not be tolerated by the Commission," Hollingsworth said in an enforcement-related letter to a South Carolina amateur. "The volunteer work of these Official Observers is a critical element of the Commission's enforcement program," he said, adding that failure to act on an OO notice could lead to fines and other sanctions.

Hollingsworth's comments were contained in an April 7 station-inspection follow-up letter to Richard Whiten, WB2OTK, of Easley, South Carolina. Hollingsworth and an FCC engineering team visited Whiten's station on January 22 after what Hollingsworth called "longstanding complaints" about the operation of Whiten's station. Whiten reportedly cooperated in the station inspection. According to the FCC letter, the Commission has received "numerous complaints" about Whiten "regarding profanity, obscenity, broadcasting extreme racial slurs, deliberate interference and failure to

**"The volunteer work of these Official Observers is a critical element of the Commission's enforcement program,"**

properly identify." Hollingsworth also said he'd heard complaints that Whiten had played recordings over the air "for the purpose of harassment or deliberate interference."

Hollingsworth noted that Whiten had "apparently ignored notices from Official Observers," and pointed out that the volunteer OO's work "in accordance with an agreement between the

Commission and the ARRL and in accordance with our statutory authority."

"One thing I have really picked up as I travel around to groups is the frustration of the OOs," Hollingsworth told the League this week. "We're going to correct that, pure and simple."

In his letter, he told Whiten that, although the FCC considers hams to be self-policing, "the success of that regulatory approach depends upon the adherence to notices of possible improper operation from other licensed amateurs who are recognized

Official Observers." The FCC asked Whiten to list all notices from OOs he has received since the start of his license term on September 27, 1994, and any corrective actions taken in response.

**The FCC considers hams to be self-policing**

Hollingsworth also took advantage of the opportunity provided by his letter to Whiten to spell out the FCC's position on obscene and indecent Amateur Radio transmissions. "Obscene speech is not protected by the First Amendment and cannot be broadcast at any time," he advised. Indecent speech also is not protected between 6 AM and 10 PM, in accordance with the so-called "safe harbor" policy the FCC uses with commercial broadcasters.

Hollingsworth also told Whiten he would be forwarding, under separate cover, tape recordings made of Whiten's transmissions last November on 20 meters. "You will be requested to provide a full explanation for those radio transmissions," he wrote.

"No decisions have been made yet in this case," Hollingsworth told the League. "We're still seeking information."

Reprinted from *The ARRL Letter*

## Cordless phone inventor, N9LC, SK

George H. Sweigert, N9LC, of Fort Wayne, Indiana, died February 23. He was 79. First licensed as W8ZIS, Sweigert was a World War II veteran. Sweigert received a patent for the invention of the cordless telephone in 1969. He was employed at Magnavox Electronics, ITT Technical Institute and the Indiana Vocational Technical College. He was also active in Air Force MARS. His wife, Katherine "Kay" Sweigert, two daughters, and four sons are among his survivors.—Kay Sweigert. Reprinted from *The ARRL Letter*

# Radio Scanners and the Law

## FCC rules changed

The FCC has amended its rules to strengthen existing prohibitions on scanning receivers that can receive cellular telephone transmissions. While the new rules contain specific exemptions for the Amateur Service, they will have important ramifications for the manufacture of new Amateur Radio equipment that scans frequencies outside the ham bands.

The new rules--released March 31 in a *Report and Order*--broaden the definition of a scanning receiver to include receivers that automatically switch among two or more frequencies between 30 and 960 MHz that can stop at and receive a detected signal. Still exempted are receivers designed solely for operation as a part of a licensed station. In response to an ARRL request, the FCC clarified that the rules do not apply to Amateur Service receivers unless they cover frequencies outside the ham bands.

The FCC also widened its definition of "test equipment" exempted from the cellular reception restriction. The adopted definition defines test equipment by function, rather than by end user as proposed, thus permitting sale to the general public.

Receivers that allow reception of cellular frequencies because of their poor image response would be illegal under the new rules. As it proposed, the Commission adopted a 38-dB rejection standard for signals in the cellular bands "for any frequency to which the receiver can be tuned."

The FCC abandoned a proposal to require manufacturers to limit reception of cellular service

frequencies by "direct pickup" through the cabinet. The FCC also backed away from a proposal that could have required epoxy potting and nonremovable components to prevent scanner modification. The League had argued that this could raise the cost of buying and repairing equipment and could preclude ham gear modification for CAP and MARS or for experimental purposes.

The FCC adopted a more generalized requirement that receivers be designed so that tuning, control circuits, and filtering are inaccessible, and that any attempted modifications render the receiver inoperative.

The new FCC rules also prohibit modification of scanning receivers as a business or on an ongoing basis "regardless of the date of manufacture or number of units modified." The Commission also said modification of any scanning receiver is prohibited and invalidates the equipment authorization. New, permanent labels on scanning receivers also will be required.

Kits for scanning receivers would be treated the same as assembled equipment. The League plans to look closely at this provision to make sure it will not prevent amateur manufacturers from producing legitimate transverting equipment.

The new rules become effective due 30 days after their publication in *The Federal Register*, but the FCC said it would include "transitional provisions" in its rules. A copy of the *Report and Order* is available on the ARRL Web site at <http://www.arrl.org/announce/et98-RandO.html>

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Reprinted from *The ARRL Letter*

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## Virginia issues special Amateur Radio ID cards

Qualified Virginia Amateur Radio operators now can obtain Department of Emergency Services photo identification cards and license plates bearing the RACES logo. Members of Virginia ARES or RACES who meet stringent requirements may be issued the new photo ID and RACES-logo plates (ARES members, by formal agreement, are also RACES when activated by a governmental entity). Virginia State RACES Officer **Frank Mackey, K4EC**, says "law enforcement, emergency management officials and security professionals have become more concerned about who is allowed to enter secure areas during times of emergencies." Authorities in charge of disaster and emergency situations will easily recognize the standardized, high-security ID. The plates and ID cost \$15 for a two-year term (renewable).--*Martin Gary, W2MG; Frank Mackey, K4EC*

April 1999

Reprinted from *The ARRL Letter*

## Field Day '99

It's just about time to dust off the bench keyer, warm up the tubes and get ready for Field Day '99. Mark your calendars for the weekend of June 26 and 27. This will be the last Field Day for the Millennium. As in the past it should prove to be a unique event.

Each year hundreds of Amateur Radio operators around the country set up an emergency operating station in tents, schools or public buildings. During a 24-hour marathon, the operators attempt to make as many contacts as possible using the many different amateur

operating frequencies and communications modes.

The club's Executive Board has begun planning for this special event. We will return to the Princess' Lakes town hall in an effort to be the top club in the country with the most contacts.

This year's game plan will be discussed at the April 17th club meeting. Videotapes of previous Field Day events will be shown. -W8ISH

## Swatch-word

Have you looked at your Swatch lately to see what time it is?

If your timepiece carries the Swiss Logo it could be threatening your ability to talk on 2-meters in the future. According to the latest rumor the Swatch Corporation is planning on establishing the "Swatchbeat" using the recently launched mini-Sputnik to transmit messages related to the Swatch companies campaign to a new "global concept of time." They will be using frequencies that cover the 2-meter band.

The good news is that the ARRL has weighed into the burgeoning controversy and suggested that the Swatch company use a commercial satellite for its project instead.

League Executive Vice President, Dave Sumner, K1ZZ, says "The Amateur Radio community must stand against the 'Beatnik' satellite because it represents such an undesirable precedent." He proposed that Swatch cancel the launch, planned for April 16 from the Russian Mir space station.

Swatch reports it has solicited more than 5000 messages--including voice and text files--for possible transmission on the new satellite. Messages selected for use were to include a reference to the "beat" theme.

You can help stop this invasion of our 2-meter frequencies by contacting the Swatch Corporation at their Web site.-W8ISH

## You're not old UNLESS you can remember:

Being sent to the drugstore to test vacuum tubes for the TV.

When boys couldn't wear anything but leather shoes to school.

When it took five minutes for the TV to warm up.

When all your friends got their hair cut at the kitchen table.

When nearly everyone's mom was at home when the kids got there.

When a dime was a decent allowance, and a quarter a huge bonus.

When girls neither dated nor kissed until late high school, if then.

When you'd reach into a muddy gutter for a penny.

When you got your windshield cleaned, oil checked, and gas pumped, without asking, for free, every time. And you got trading stamps to boot!

When laundry detergent had free glasses, dishes or towels hidden inside the box.

**OPERATING MODES****CW and Phone**

All stations may be worked once per mode on each band. Mobiles may be worked once per mode per Indiana county that they operate from. No Repeater QSO'S.

**EXCHANGE INFORMATION****Indiana stations**

Signal report and County.

**Non-Indiana stations**

Signal Report, State, Province, or Country.

**SCORING**

Phone contacts count 2 QSO points, all other modes count 3 QSO points. Indiana Stations multiply QSO points by total of Indiana Counties + States + Provinces + Countries worked. Non-Indiana stations multiply the total QSO points by the number of Indiana Counties worked.

**SUGGESTED FREQUENCIES**

**CW:** 1810, 3539, 3739, 7035, 7115, 14045, 21045, 21120, 28045, 28120 6M , 2M , 432 MHz

**PHONE:** 1860, 3890, 7280, 14285, 21385, 28400, 50.14, 144.215, 432.120

**AWARDS:** Certificates will be awarded for First and Second place in each Category, State, Province, and Country. A participation award will be issued to every station making at least 20 Indiana contacts. Send logs with SASE to Sharon Brown, 905 W. Parkway Dr., Pleasant Lk, IN 46779. You may submit logs via e-mail to [sharon.l.brown@gte.net](mailto:sharon.l.brown@gte.net). Logs must be received by June 11, 1999.

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Fax 317-898-1574

Wittfield St. is the first street east of Post Road on Tenth St., then north on Wittfield to 1217 (RED MAILBOX)

**INDIANA****QSO PARTY**

Sponsored by  
**Land of Lakes**  
**Amateur Radio Club**

May 8<sup>th</sup> & May 9<sup>th</sup>

Start at 1800 Z  
End at 2300 Z

**Categories**

Single Operator  
Multi-Operator  
Club Station  
VHF-UHF

**Repeater Update**

Autopatch access codes have been changed. All current member should now have valid access codes and speed dial numbers.

The PL access tone has been change to 151.40 Hz. This tone is currently on the output only. Future plans are to implement this tone on the input. This will allow a weak station with PL to access the repeater while limiting the kerchunking by distant signals. Stronger signals will still be granted access with no PL.

A modem has been installed to permit easier access to the controller. Listen for more frequent changes in voice messages on the system.

For suggestion, comments, complaints, or question about the repeater, contact a member of the technical committee listed on the second page of this newsletter.